

Corporate Hartz, LLC

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IGNORE CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AT YOUR OWN PERIL

In the news this week were two stories, about companies' handling of Corporate Social Responsibility issues. Both hold lessons for all business leaders about the costs of not doing the right thing, and the benefits of doing the right thing.

Apple

On July 12th, it was reported that San Francisco would suspend purchases of Apple computers after the company stopped participating in an environmental certification program (EPEAT) used by governments and universities to make purchasing decisions. It was feared that there would be even broader consequences because many public organizations are required to use the EPEAT registry when making purchasing decisions. Apple's actions would prove to be both short-sighted and short-lived. Within 2 days, Apple announced it was putting its computer products back on the industry standard list, which ensures that electronics are environmentally friendly.

Teen Vogue and Seventeen magazines

This week, also, the public was presented with the experiences of a nonprofit group called SPARK Movement, which advocates for "truth in advertising" with respect to the images (often photo-shopped) of women and girls in the media. Two teenage leaders met with the editor-in-chief of *Teen Vogue*, which reaches one million teens and tweens as young as ten, to present a petition with 28,000+ signatures asking that the magazine agree not to digitally manipulate images of women and girls. The editor spent less than 5 minutes with the young women, presented them with copies of the magazine, and suggested they "learn more about it." *Teen Vogue* not only did not win over its audience, but lost readers.

By contrast, a similar petition and request for a meeting with *Seventeen's* editor won the approval of SPARK Movement and women and teens nation-wide. This magazine not only took a great deal of time to listen to the young women and warmly discuss the challenges of their work and cause, but further, it assured them that the August issue of *Seventeen* is 100% free of altered body shapes in photographs. Corporate Hartz would like to salute top editor, Ann Shoket! However, the biggest benefit will be reflected in their increased subscriber base and readership. This is the perfect example of "doing well while doing good."

Thank you for connecting with me on issues important to you and your organization.

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